

CHANDAMAMA

AUGUST 1980

Rs. 1.50



Turn to Page 35
for the story of
"THE IMPOSSIBLE
MUSTARD SEED"

చందమామ ఇతివృత్త తాతా

అందరినీ ఆనందపరుచుకుందామే

అందరినీ ఆనందపరుచుకుందామే

India is unique.

With its many cultures, its many faiths,
with the many languages and dialects its
many people speak. People of different
castes, communities, creeds. People with
countless differences but a single pride.

Their pride in being an Indian.

We nurture this pride. For we believe
that India is one great nation. A nation
with a magnificent heritage that we all
share.

CHANDAMAMA

In many languages, a common tradition



చందమామ **CHANDAMAMA** చందోబా

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Now you have refreshing reasons to smile:

Flash freshness... the blue oral cleanser in Flash clears stale breath and decay-causing germs.

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mouthcare
in a Flash!**

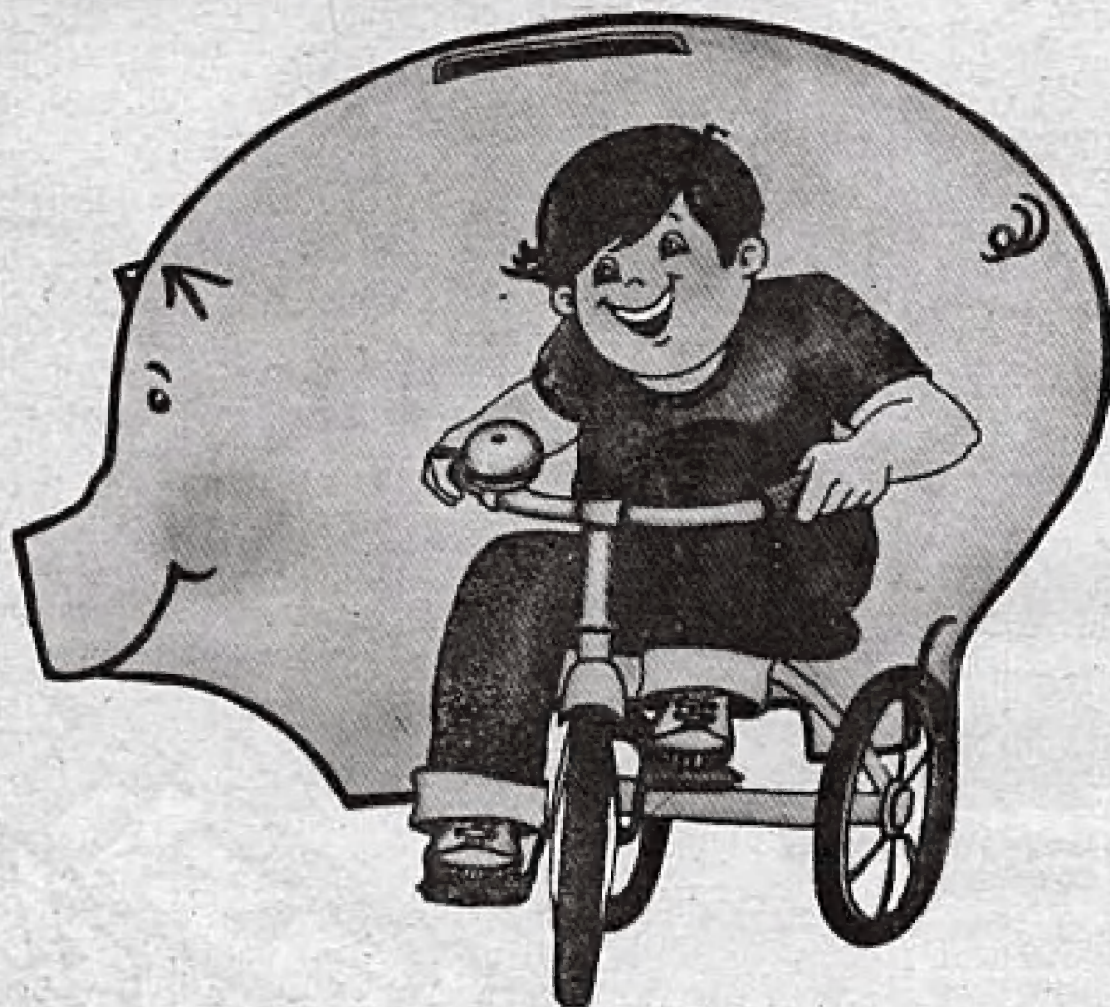
Flash

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Balakshema Deposit

CANARA BANK

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Over 1,200 branches
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Mina Hated Geometry

Nothing was tiring and boring like Geometry for Mina

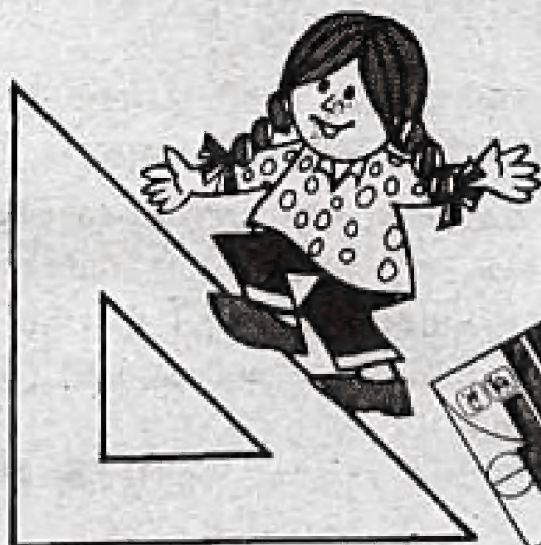
It never interested her. Those acute and obtuse angles, those parallelograms and the hexagons. She was miserable.

And then it happened, Her brother Raju bought her a beautiful yellow, and orange instrument box. Crystal clear set square and protractor, silvershine streamlined compass.

Mina just fell in love with the box and the instruments. That night she dreamt of herself climbing the peak of a triangle, rolling inside a circle, balancing on a scale. What fun!

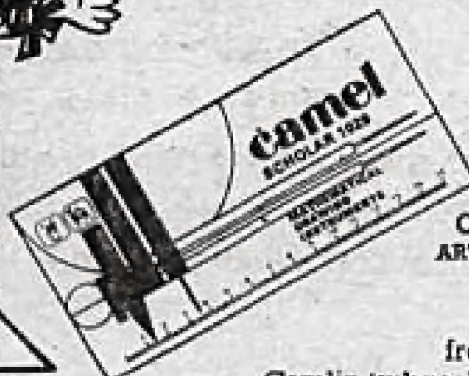
Now she couldn't help liking Geometry—the hexagons and the parallelograms.

Now Mina Loves Geometry



camel

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from makers of
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3rd Prize: Vinod Menon, Bassein Road. **Consolation Prizes:** Arlene Kwan, Calcutta-12;

Sundeep Sen Gupta, Rourkela-2; Kumari Minati Mishra, Nayagarh; Narendra S. Shetty,

Bombay-400 012; Ku. Neeta Ghate, Raipur.

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GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

तृणानि भूमिरुदकं वाक् चतुर्थी च सूनृता ।
एतान्यपि सतां गेहे नोच्छिद्यन्ते कदाचन ॥

*Tṛṇāni bhūmirudakam vāk caturthī ca sūnṛtā
Etānyapi satām gehe nocchidyante kadācana*

A grass-mat, a spot to relax, water and fourthly a word of welcome — these four things are not refused (to a visitor) in a gentleman's house.

The Hitopadeshah



Founder: CHAKRAPANI

Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

THOUGHTS FOR 15TH AUGUST

The anniversary of the nation's independence is the time when the people ought to rededicate themselves to the service of their country.

Freedom came to India thirty-three years ago. It is a habit with many people to say that the country achieved freedom rather easily, without or with little violence. It is high time we were frank. There could hardly be a greater violence than cutting the country into two. This violence has been the cause of a chain of problems, all violent. Communal clashes resulted in the formidable refugee problem. Pakistan that had been carved out of India became divided again—after a terrible wave of violence. Many people had fled the land then known as East Pakistan and later Bangla Desh—and had entered Assam. That has given birth to yet another problem which we are suffering currently.

So, the division of the country, far from solving any problem, gave birth to numerous grave problems. What is the lesson? It is only in unity that peace, progress and prosperity can be secured. Never again let any Indian think in terms of division; let us never nurture any idea that is not commensurate with the interest of India as a whole. Any divisive idea or action will bring us untold sorrow.

On this auspicious day, let us take a solemn pledge to always stand united, to aspire for building up a strong and ideal nation. Surely we can do this.



LET US KNOW

Are there Abominable Snowmen in the high hills?

- Anirvan, Pondicherry

The people of Nepal and Tibet as well as those of India living along the borders of these countries believe that creatures resembling human beings but hairy and much bigger live in the remote Himalayan and Tibetan hills. Such a creature is called the *Yeti*. In recent reports they are referred to as Abominable Snowmen.

One can see an unusual skull preserved in the Pangboche monastery, situated at a high altitude, on way to Everest. That is supposed to be of a *Yeti*.

There are many people in those areas who say that they have seen the *Yeti*. A few explorers have seen some huge forms at night, but not distinctly. The *Yetis*, if they are there, seem to be highly sensitive; they shun exposure to human beings.

However, large foot-steps purported to be of the *Yetis* have been photographed. Mr. Don Whillans, an Englishman who was a member of the Annapurna Expedition team, saw some mysterious creatures at night. In the morning he went to the spot and photographed some impressive footprints.

An interesting book on the subject is *High in the Thin Cold Air* by Edmund Hillary of the conquest of Everest fame and Desmond Doig, a noted journalist and author. The book contains a number of tales and legends about the *Yeti*, apart from valuable observations.

It seems to us that the *Yeti* is a kind of sub-human creature. Perhaps once there were many of them and people had frequent chances to see them. But now their number is dwindling. The survivors of the dying species are not as smart or forthcoming as their ancestors.



THE OLD AND THE NEW

In a certain village lived a farmer. One day he took his son along and proceeded to a distant cattle-market to buy a pair of bullocks.

The farmer's wife made a packet of some breads for them.

They sat down under a tree at noon and ate. Still they had three pieces of bread left in the packet. They reached the cattle-market late in the afternoon and bought the bullocks and began their return-journey.

The road lay through a wide field. A little away from the road, under a tree, they saw a well. "Let's wash and eat the remaining breads," said the farmer. There were steps inside the well leading to the water. The two descended the steps.

Said the son, "Father, you must eat two and leave only one for me." Needless to say, he had the three breads in mind.

It so happened that there were three ghosts in the deserted well. Taking the farmer and his son to be necromancers who wanted to eat them up, they took gaseous forms and said to the farmer, "Please spare us. We'd rather work as your slaves!"

The farmer soon grasped the situation. "Well, well," he said "we are no doubt fond of chewing up ghosts. We came a long way knowing that you three were here. However, if you are so reluctant to become our food, follow us. But you must work hard."

"We will, sir. We thought

that no necromancer will ever bird us out. But here you are!" said the ghosts with heavy sighs.

"That is right. Here we are! Follow us!" commanded the farmer.

The ghosts followed them. The farmer ordered them to do all sorts of works and they performed a day's work in an hour. Their main job was to pick cotton from the fields. They resided in the farmer's cattle-shed.

The three ghosts had some friends among other ghosts. Once on a visit to the well, these friends were surprised to see the three ghosts gone. One of them, a smarty, looked for them here and there and at last found them out.

"I don't think that the farmer really knows necromancy. I'll remain invisible. If the farmer really knows the science of

tackling us, he ought to find me out," said the smarty.

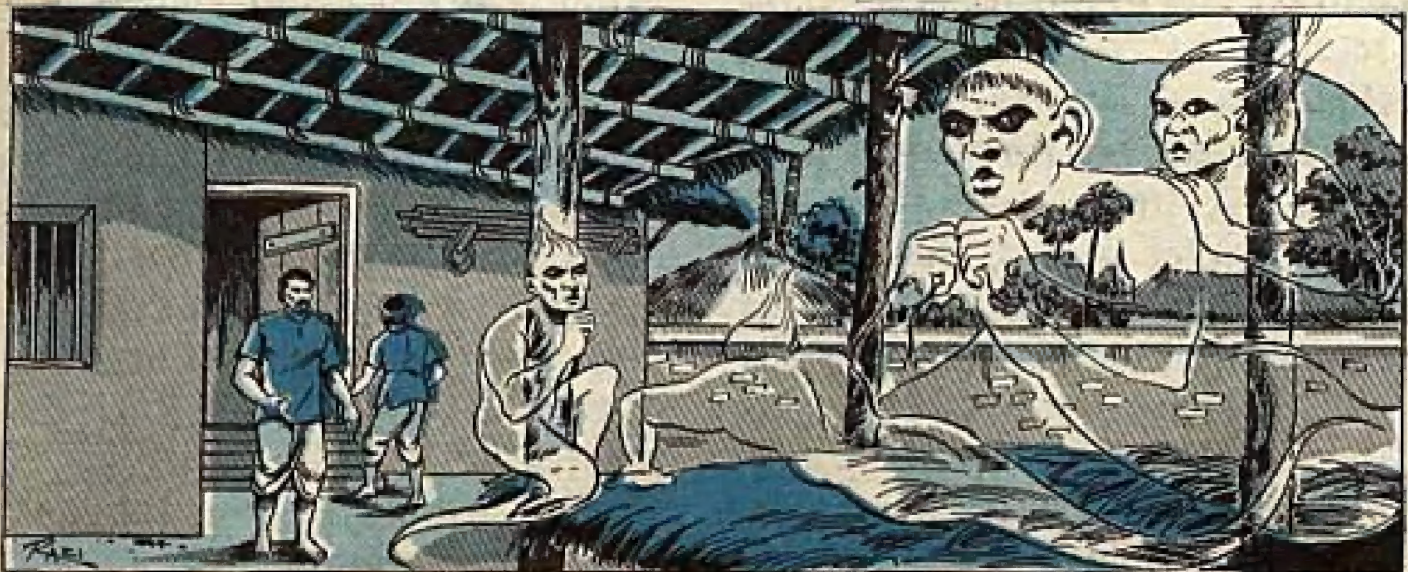
The farmer and his son entered the shed early in the night. They had added a new buffalo to their herd. The buffalo was suffering from a disease the folk-cure for which was to press a red hot iron on its hide.

"I'll singe the new one with red-hot iron," said the farmer.

That was enough. The smarty at once assumed a gaseous form and said pleadingly, "Please don't. I can spin cotton!"

The farmer understood and nodded, "Very good. Spin and teach your three friends the art of spinning too."

At night the old ghosts told the smarty, "You bragging fool! We were only picking cotton. Now you'll oblige us to spin too!"





THREE PRINCESSES

12. The Wizard Kidnapped

(Udayan beheaded the giant that guarded him. He, assuming the form of the dwarf wizard, led the elder giant to a well and beheaded him too. But to his disappointment, a new head cropped up on the giant's neck. The giant threw Udayan into the well and departed.)

After pushing Udayan down into the well, the giant went his way. Udayan who had changed into the form of the dwarf wizard did not know what to do. The well was deep and because of his present size his voice also had become low and puny.

In the enchanted garden Kumar, Nishith, and the real wizard continued to remain invisible. The magic powder which could have made them visible

was with Udayan. They too did not know what to do.

The three princesses felt greatly disturbed when they did not see the three brothers anywhere. Taking advantage of the giant's absence, they searched the garden thoroughly and even came near the well. Udayan who could hear their conversation tried his best to attract their attention to him, but his voice did not reach them.

Udayan was disappointed.



Soon he saw a huge sword stuck in the mud at the bottom of the well. He recognised it to be the giant's. In his mad wrath the giant had thrown it into the well along with Udayan. Udayan lifted up the sword and, when he knew that the princesses had moved away, hurled it out. Next day, in the course of their search for the lost young men the princesses came near the well again. As expected their eyes fell on the sword.

"How did it come here? Surely, it was not here when we last visited this place!" said Subhasini. They took careful steps and went closer to the

well and looked in. What they saw surprised them and amused them as well. Half of the well had been filled with a variety of fruits. Climbing the heap of fruits was Udayan who, of course looked like the dwarf wizard.

As the sisters kept looking on, the remaining part of the well also got filled up with fruits and Udayan came out while the princesses lent him their helping hands.

Udayan described at some length all that had happened—how he took a calculated risk and cut off the giant's head not knowing that unlike his brother, the elder giant was capable of bringing forth a new head.

"It took a long time for me to remember that by the help of the towel I can materialise fruits; and by the help of the heaping fruits I can climb out of the well," said Udayan.

"It is good that the idea came to you. Otherwise who knows for how long you would have remained a prisoner in the well!" said Sukesini. Soon they went to that corner of the garden where Kumar, Nishith, and the wizard stood invisible. Udayan sprinkled a little magic powder on them. At once they reappeared in their proper form.

"In a way all that has happened is good. The gaint is under the impression that you are in the well," observed the wizard.

"But what will be his reaction if he looks into the well and instead of seeing me sees the well filled with fruits?" asked Udayan.

"Why not make the well invisible?" asked the wizard. He added, "Such is the memory of the giant that if he does not see the well he will not remember the well."

Udayan agreed to do according to the wizard's advice. They went near the well and made it invisible by the help of the powder.

"Listen, our good friend, we want you to do one thing for us. It is a long time since we the three brothers came out in search of the lost princesses. The king and the queen must be awfully worried on account of their daughters. Please go to Shravasti and inform the royal couple that their daughters as well as we are well. We should be with them before long. Once you have delivered the message, you should come back to us," Udayan told the wizard.

The wizard got ready for the journey.



"My horse had fallen into the gorge outside the giant's castle. When I saw that the ground at the bottom of the gorge abounded in green grass I let my horse remain there. Then I entered the castle on foot. That is why my brothers could not see me and were soon here in search of me. My horse must be in the gorge waiting for me. There ought to be a way out of the gorge and you must be knowing it. Ride that horse to the palace. The horse will convince the king that you are our messenger," said Udayan again.

The wizard soon found out



Udayan's horse and mounted it and galloped towards the palace. On the outskirts of the city two captains of the king's army confronted him.

"Who are you? Where did you get this horse?" the captains demanded with suspicion.

"I am your friend, I am carrying good news for the king. Please lead me to his presence," replied the wizard. The captains surveyed the horse and the wizard with great curiosity. To satisfy them, the wizard had to tell them where the princesses and the three brothers were.

"If what you are saying is true, then one of us should go

and guard them till you returned there after delivering your message to the king," proposed one of the captains. The wizard had to serve as his guide. The wizard had no objection to the proposal. The senior captain led his horse towards the giant's dwelling. Then the wizard turned his horse towards Shravasti again and galloped as fast as he could.

He had been midway between the giant's dwelling and Shravasti when he could hear a hissing sound and feel the approach of a whirlwind. He understood that it was the giant who, in the form of the vulture, was about to descend. He looked here and there for a hiding place, but in vain. The vulture swooped down upon him and held him tight in its claws and lifted him up and flew away.

The white horse jumped and shrieked furiously and then trotted on towards the palace.

Out for a morning ride, it was the king himself who saw the riderless horse. At once he recognised it to be the horse that had been given to Udayan. He, his minister and his bodyguards tried to guide the horse into the palace, but the horse refused to

be guided. Rather it showed such signs that soon the king felt that it was trying to guide them somewhere. Quietly they followed it.

On the outskirts of the forest the horse stopped and moved its head in a certain way which meant that it did not approve of so many men following it.

The king turned to his minister and said, "Better we retreat. You follow it alone."

The minister nodded and he followed the horse.

* * *

Why is the wizard not coming back?—wondered the three princesses and the three brothers. Ten days passed. Their feeling was that the wizard did not mean to deceive them. He must have run into some danger.

"Better I go and see for myself what the matter is. You keep with you a part of the magic powder and use it if necessary," Udayan told his brothers and left for Shravasti riding the dark horse of Nishith.

On his way Udayan saw a blind old man lying in a pit and crying for help. He got off his horse and helped the man come out of the pit. One of the powders Udayan had could restore vision to the blind. Moved



with pity, he applied it on the old man's eyes. Indescribable was the old man's joy at the miracle when he could see! He insisted on Udayan coming to his house which belonged to a small town. The old man was the father of an officer of a king who ruled over the town. The king heard about Udayan's miracles and expressed his desire to meet him.

When Udayan was led to his court, the king offered him the position of a courtier and requested him to settle down there.

"My good king! I shall never

forget your kindness. But at the moment I am out to accomplish an urgent mission. I shall return to you at another time," promised Udayan.

The king reluctantly allowed him to go.

Udayan rode at the highest speed he could command. Next day he was at Shravasti. The news of Udayan's arrival spread like wild fire. The king and the queen came running to him and received him with deep warmth as well as anxiety. But looking at his face they felt sure that he had brought good news.

Till late in the night Udayan had to answer numerous questions put by the queen about her daughters. How do they pass their time? How tall had they grown? How often do they remember their parents? With

love and reverence Udayan answered all her questions.

It was dawn. Udayan told the royal couple that he must return to the giant's dwelling immediately. "I cannot be in peace until I have brought back your daughters to you along with my two brothers," he announced.

Tears drizzling in their eyes, the king and the queen looked on as Udayan rode away.

It was evening when Udayan entered the giant's enchanted area. But what a shock awaited him! Five nooses hung from the branches of a stout tree. His two brothers, the wizard, and the captain of the king—their legs and hands bound—had been made to sit before the giant who thundered at them.

To continue



WORLD MYTHOLOGY—3

TORN BY THE TAUGHT



Actaeon, the proud young man, desired to become a great hunter and runner. Practice made him a past-master in the art of shooting arrows.

He tamed a pack of hounds and taught them to become excellent hunters. It became a ferocious pack.



His hounds were so strong and swift that they could even chase tigers and kill them.



Goddess Diana who dwelt in the forest was a swift runner. But Actaeon claimed that he 'could run swifter than she.





Once while Diana was bathing in a forest pool, Actaeon peeped at her through a bush. That was immodest of him.

Diana, coming out of the water found him out. Actaeon laughed and began to run. But Diana changed him into a stag.



Instantly his own hounds gave him a hot chase, little knowing that the stag was none other than their master. Actaeon ran at his fastest.



But in vain. The hounds whom he had taught so well caught up with him and tore him to shreds.



THE STRANGE CASE OF A SLAVE GIRL

In a certain town lived a blacksmith. People were amazed with a certain miracle he could perform. He would hold a piece of burning coal in his grip, but his palm will suffer no burn. He would even throw his hand into the oven, but the flames would do him no harm.

A pious man who heard about the blacksmith's miracle thought that the blacksmith must be more pious than him. He paid

a visit to the blacksmith's house. The blacksmith received him cordially.

The pious man observed the blacksmith for three days. Even at night he kept a close watch on him. But he did not see the blacksmith practising any rite or any special discipline.

"How are you able to perform the miracle without practising any special rite?" the pious man asked the blacksmith on the





fourth day.

"My noble guest, I must confess that I have no credit in what I do. I consider myself rather a sinner. It is someone else's boon that has given me the power," said the blacksmith.

The pious man grew even more curious. At his request, the blacksmith recounted the following story:

Years ago, the blacksmith saw a slave girl working in the household of a rich man. She was charming, but she shied away from everybody.

The blacksmith one day proposed to buy her off the rich man.

"Why do you want to buy me?" asked the girl.

"I desire to marry you," said the proud blacksmith. He was sure that the girl would be happy to hear this. Who would not wish to be elevated to the position of a wife from that of a slave?

But, to his surprise, the girl showed no sign of joy. Calmly she said, "I cannot marry anybody. I am a devotee of God. To Him alone I belong."

This wounded the blacksmith's pride. He called her names and ridiculed her claim to being a devotee. The girl made no answer.

A year later there was a great famine. The rich man who owned the girl dismissed all his slaves because he could not feed them.

"Come to me. I am still willing to marry you," the blacksmith told the girl.

"I'm sorry, I cannot marry anyone," replied the girl.

This infuriated the blacksmith. He threw nasty words at her. But she did not answer back.

Days passed. The famine proved devastating. One afternoon the blacksmith heard a knock on his door. He opened

the door and saw the girl. Starvation had reduced her to a skeleton.

"Will you be pleased to give me something to eat if I work for you?" she asked.

"I shall give you food only if you agree to marry me," announced the blacksmith.

"But that is not possible," said the girl with a sigh and she went away. The blacksmith sat sulking under his humiliation.

Two days later she returned.

"I'm dying of hunger. Please give me a little food. God will bless you," she muttered.

The blacksmith held out a dish before her. The girl's eyes twinkled with hope. She smiled.

"Are you ready to fulfil my condition?" just then asked the blacksmith.

"No," replied the girl. Her smile disappeared.

"Then no food for you," shouted the blacksmith haughtily, taking the dish away.

The blacksmith was angry with the girl, but he could not be at peace. Next day he saw the girl lying under a tree, about to die. Suddenly he was moved with great pity.

"How wicked I am to refuse food to her because she has wounded my vanity!" he



thought. Then he called the girl home and laid several items of delicious food before her.

"I have no condition this time. Please eat to your heart's content," said the blacksmith.

"God will bless you. Since you work with fire, I pray to God that he make you immune to fire," said the girl and she sat down for eating.

The blacksmith did not take her words as anything more than a formal thanks-giving. But suddenly a strong wind upturned his oven. The burning coal and some melting metal fell all over his body. To his great surprise he saw that they

did him no harm!

He cautiously picked up a burning coal and held it. Nothing happened. He waved his hand through the fire. He did not feel any discomfort.

"O divine girl! The boon you wished to obtain for me is come! I am immune to fire!" exclaimed the blacksmith.

"Is that so?" asked the girl. Next moment a gloom descended on her. She muttered, "O God, never had I asked Thee for anything. I know that of Thine own accord Thou would grant to people whatever is good for

them. Why did I break my discipline? This shows that I had grown a weakness for this man. Since I have asked for something once, let me do it once more. This time I ask Thee to take me away from this world."

She knelt down for meditation. In a minute her body slumped. She had passed away!

The blacksmith concluded, "What a fool I was not to know what a great soul the slave girl was!"

The pious man returned absolutely amazed.





*New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire*

THE BLUE LOTUS OF THE MAGIC LAKE

Dark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. It rained from time to time and flashes of lightning revealed weird faces. Howls of jackals faded into the eerie laughter of spirits.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree again and brought the corpse down. But as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, I do not know if you will be able to put your achievement to any use. I know of people who achieve a certain goal, but refuse to enjoy any profit from it. To illustrate my point, let me tell you the story of Rudrak and Chandrak. Listen to my narration with attention. That might give you relief."

The vampire went on: In days gone by there was a king of the Yakshas—a tribe of



supernatural beings—named Satrajit. Two young Yakshas who served him were Rudrak and Chandrak. The Yaksha king loved both of them equally well. Between the two Chandrak was more smart and handsome.

The king had a daughter called Tejwati—his only child. Rudrak loved her very much, but he was not sure whether Tejwati loved him or not. One day, when he was alone with the king, he asked, "My lord, what is your plan for Tejwati's future?"

"She has to be married to an eligible Yaksha youth!" replied

the king.

Rudrak overcame his hesitation and said, "When the time comes, please do not forget me as a candidate for her hand in marriage."

The king gave a loving pat on Rudrak's back and said, "The time can be even now! Why should I seek a bridegroom elsewhere if you desire to marry her?"

In the evening the king told Tejwati, "My daughter, I wish you to marry Rudrak."

The princess kept quiet for a moment. Then she said, "Father, I am under a vow. I shall marry him who can drink the juice of the blue lotus that blooms in the magic lake of the Gundharvas."

The magic lake of the Gundharvas—another tribe of supernatural beings—was situated at some distance. It was known that one who could drink the juice of the blue lotus of the lake would look extremely beautiful. But to get the lotus was not easy. The lake was guarded by the Gundharvas. They won't let one who did not belong to their tribe pluck a lotus.

At night the king summoned Rudrak and Chandrak and told

them about Tejwati's vow. "I want her to marry one of you, both of you being dear to me like my sons. I want you to go for the blue lotus," he said.

Both started for the lake separately, in the morning. Chandrak reached the lake by evening and spotted a blue lotus. But before he had got down into the lake a lion pounced upon him.

Chandrak knew the ways of the Gundharvas. He took hold of the lion's throat and tried to throttle it. The lion changed into his real form—that of a Gundharva—and cried with pain and appealed to Chandrak to spare him.

Chandrak loosened his grip and demanded a lotus. The Gundharva let him have one.

It was growing dark. Chandrak took rest inside a cave on the bank of the lake.

At midnight he woke up at someone's cry. He hurried out of the cave and, in the faint moonlight, saw Rudrak lying senseless. He had been mauled by the lion.

Chandrak took his friend in his arms and carried him into the cave. He then squeezed the petals of the blue lotus and put drops of their juice into



Rudrak's mouth.

Not only did Rudrak recover his sense, but also he looked immensely beautiful.

Both of them returned to their king. It was obvious that Rudrak had drunk the lotus juice and not Chandrak. Princess Tejwati married Rudrak.

The Vampire paused and asked in a challenging tone, "Tell me, O King, wasn't Chandrak's conduct rather foolish? If he were to kick away the benefit of his success, why did he go for the contest at all? And what about Tejwati? If she was to marry Rudrak, why did she put forth the condition?



Answer me, O King, if you can. If you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck!"

King Vikram answered forthwith: "There is nothing foolish in Chandrak's conduct. It is clear that had Tejwati been asked to choose between the two, she would have chosen Chandrak. But she had not been asked to choose, she had been asked to marry Rudrak. By laying down the condition she gave Chandrak the chance to marry her, for she knew that Chandrak alone would be able to fulfil the condition.

"If Tejwati loved Chandrak, Chandrak loved his friend. He

knew that his friend was fascinated by Tejwati while he was not. He must have also known that if Tejwati wanted to marry him, it was because he was more handsome than Rudrak. He also knew that Tejwati would have no reason to reject Rudrak once Rudrak had become more handsome. Hence he let Rudrak drink the lotus juice. In fact, he made the best use of the benefit of his success.

"Chandrak took part in the contest not because he desired to marry Tejwati, but because his master desired it."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his reply than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

It may be that men are not equal in all respects, but they are all equally men.

— *Hugh Gaitskell.*

Destination Kedarnath

"Are you willing to trek, boys?" asked Mr. Singh. "Our destination, Kedarnath, is still miles away—at a height of 12,000 feet!"

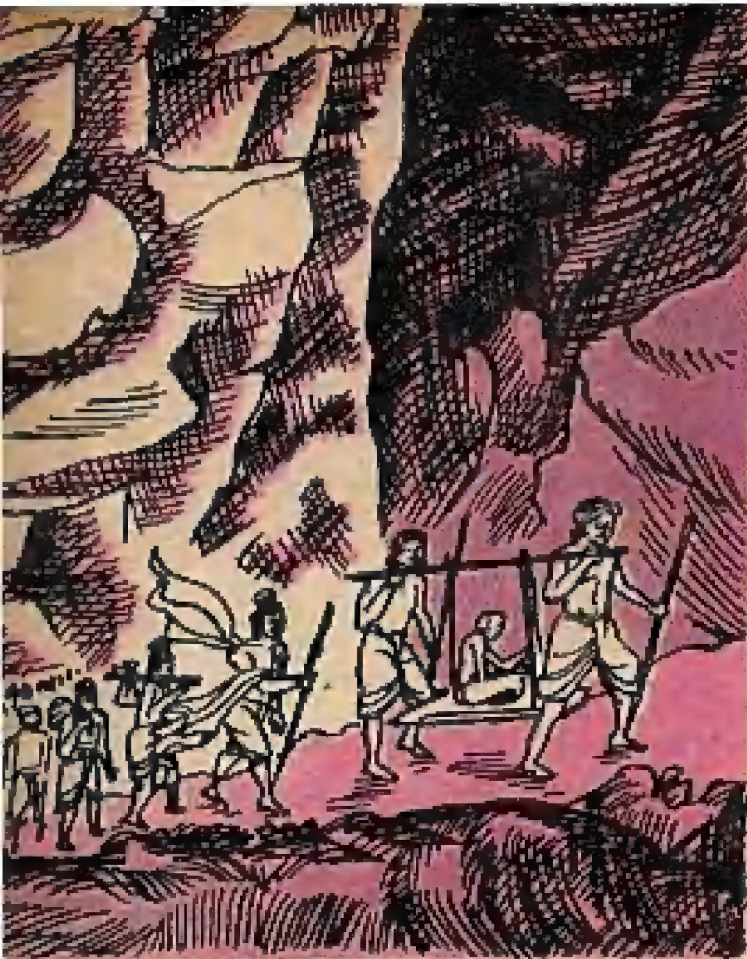
"Willing?" Ravi and Raman exclaimed, looking at each other. "We would love to. In fact, we were going to ask you if we could avail of any such chance at all!" The boys clapped their hands.

They had arrived at Sonprayag, yet another charming

village-town nestling in the Himalayas, situated near the confluence of the rivers Son Ganga and Mandakini. By and by the hills were casting a loving spell on the two boys. The rocks covered by a variety of trees and creepers, the high peaks glistening in the bright sunlight, looked surprisingly familiar, though they saw them for the first time.

Once when the Sadhu heard the two boys talking about this





experience, he said, "The Himalayan region ought to appear familiar to you even though you have not been here before."

"It ought to, is it? But why?" Ravi demanded an explanation.

"Because it is the home of the Divine Mother. Can the Mother's home be unfamiliar to any child?" said the Sadhu. But he said it with such a force of sincerity that the two boys had to appreciate his sentiment.

The trek began. Lush green trees shading them, streams surprising them with their sweet murmurs, flowers in their full bloom—rhododendrons in particular—smiling at them, the

small party marched on. At times the climb was even stiff, but no one in the party seemed to mind the difficulty. Behind and before them some old pilgrims were carried by a kind of small cots, each suspended from poles that rested on the shoulders of four porters. Yet another device amused Ravi and Raman. An individual porter carried on his back an old man in a kind of sack.

"If so many old, invalid, and physically weak pilgrims manage to visit Kedarnath through the ages, it is due to these helpful porters," remarked the Sadhu.

"Look, boys, the Triyogi Narain peak remains to your left," the Sadhu said.

"How is that peak significant?" asked Raman.

"It is on that peak that the marriage between Shiva and Uma, the daughter of Himavant, had been performed," said the Sadhu. "We are going to spend our night at Gaurikund, the birth-place of Uma."

It was a glorious sunset. They reached Gaurikund—one of the most ancient human dwellings in the Himalayas. What a lovely sight the river Mandakini presented! The even-

ing brought cool but refreshing breeze. There were a number of guest-houses in the sleepy little place.

"I am rather tired. Let us have some tea," said Mr. Singh.

"Have tea by all means; but I shall presently tell you what will really invigorate you again," said the Sadhu. And, after they had had their tea at a roadside restaurant, the Sadhu led them to a *kund*, in fact, a spa.

Mr. Singh had just stepped into the water when he cried out, "My God, it is boiling hot!"

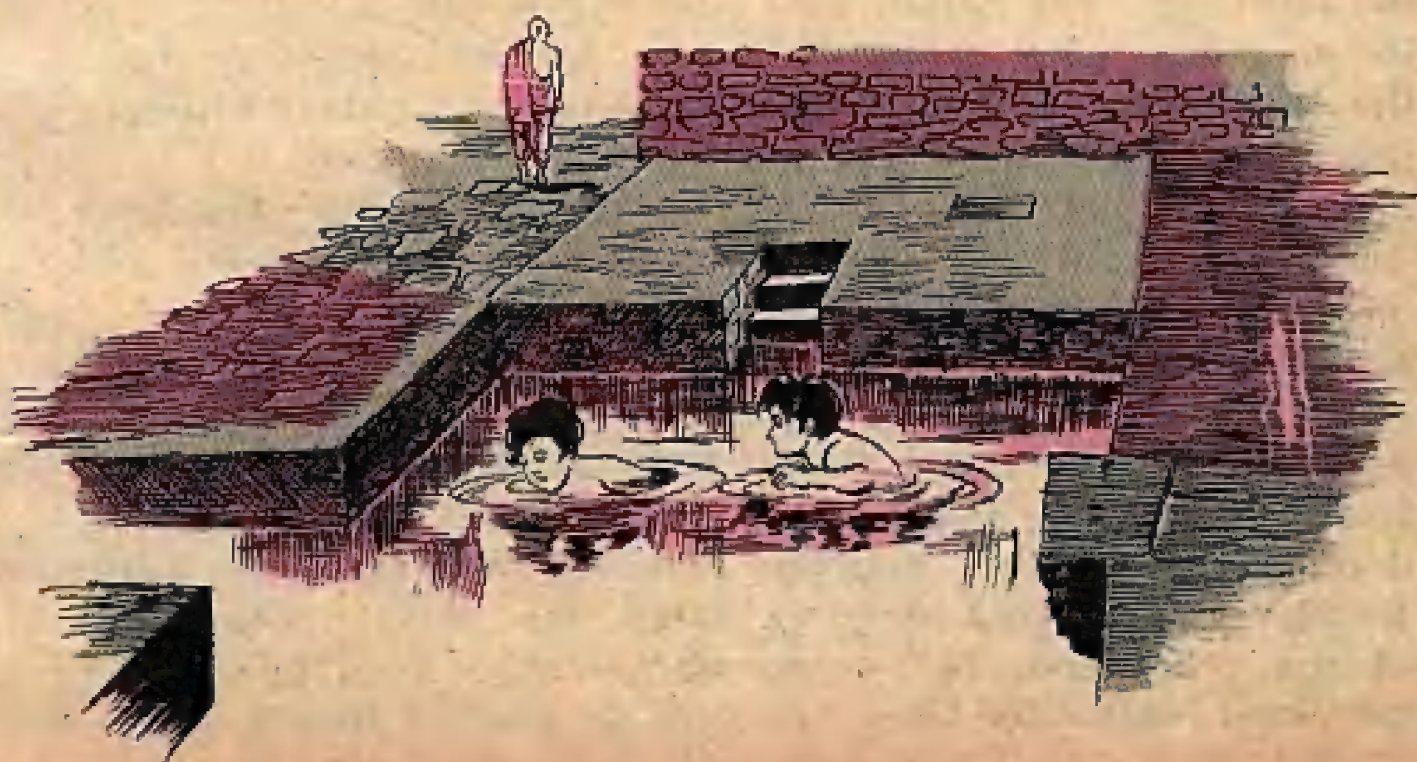
"Never mind, have a dip.

Your body will soon learn to bear the heat and you will never forget the benefit!" assured the Sadhu.

Indeed, the first feeling of discomfort soon gave way to that of extraordinary comfort. All his tiredness was gone. Ravi and Raman too had their dips in the hot spring. It was great fun.

Who would have thought of coming across such a natural hot pool at this height of the cool region?—the two boys were heard saying, splashing the water at each other.

"This mineral water has excellent qualities. It is highly





beneficent," informed the Sadhu.

They spent the night at Gaurikund and resumed trekking in the morning. The Sadhu kept on narrating many a story of the Himalayas. From time to time they relaxed near streams and drank their fresh water. Their excitement was on the increase as they grew closer to Kedarnath.

They met the Mandakini again as they approached the small hill-town, Kedarpuri, dominated by the majestic temple of Kedarnath standing at the other end, below the snow-clad Nilakantha Peak. A

thick fog hung over Kedarpuri—as if to protect the mysteries of the place from too much exposure to the visitors.

"My boys, this has been a dream for pilgrims for centuries—one of the holiest places in India. In remote villages there are people who keep on preparing for years to pay a visit to this place. When they succeed in reaching here, they are quite aged. Thank your luck that you are so young and you are here!" the Sadhu told Ravi and Raman.

They saw the deity—the symbol of Lord Shiva—guarded by an image of Nandi, the sacred bull of the Lord. A number of lamps lighted the interior and the atmosphere was overwhelmingly solemn. They also saw the images of Lord Krishna, the Pandava brothers, Kunti, and Draupadi.

"Why are the Pandavas here?" Mr. Singh asked the Sadhu.

"On their last journey it is here that Sahadeva, the youngest of the brothers, passed away. The Pandavas stopped here for some time and meditated on Shiva. Since then Shiva is being worshipped here," was the Sadhu's answer.

BASUDEO BALVANT PHADKE

The aftermath of the Great Rebellion of 1857 (the Sepoy Mutiny) was devastating. The East India Company's army burnt down hundreds of villages. Thousands of innocent people were hanged or shot dead without trial.

A boy of twelve who lived in a village called Shirdhon, not far from the modern city of Bombay, saw something of this tyranny and heard much more

than what he saw.

He also heard that the administration of India passed from the hands of the Company to those of the Government of Britain.

"Our backbone is broken. We are finished. The British rule has come to stay for ever," some old men who were in sympathy with the rebels of 1857 were heard saying with remorse.

The boy of Shirdhon did not





like such comments. Nobody suspected it—but he was growing determined to show that all was not finished with India. It had still enough fire to raise the banner of a rebellion again.

The boy grew into a young man and, at his father's instance, became a clerk in the Government. But outside the office he devoted all his time to inspiring the flame of patriotism in the hearts of the people.

First he talked to the educated and the rich. "India must become free and become a republic," was the theme of his persuasive talk. He was the first man among the patriots of

the 19th century who thought of making India a republic.

But the educated and the rich hardly encouraged him. They told him that it was crazy to think of driving away the powerful British.

The young man—Basudeo Balvant Phadke—was disappointed with the rich and the educated, but he was not disappointed with the people as a whole.

He decided to take his appeal to the poor masses. He believed that they will appreciate what the rich and the educated failed to appreciate. He went to the hamlets of a class of people known as Ramoshis. They were the valiant and faithful people who defended the forts of the once powerful Maratha Chiefs. As the British took over these forts, they had been reduced to misery.

Poor and illiterate though, the Ramoshis were a patriotic people. Basudeo kept meeting them—talking to them for a whole night at times. They responded with enthusiasm. They were willing to fight to free the country. Soon Basudeo managed to build up a secret army of the Ramoshi youths.

Basudeo trained them in fighting in the forest around the

Gultekdi hills. When he was sure of their discipline and courage, he told them, "Every ordinary English soldier returns from India carrying a huge load of our wealth. Every pie they take away belongs to us. We must snatch our money from them so that we can spend it for organising a rebellion."

His men began attacking the Government treasuries and, with the booty, decamped into the forest. They carried on such raids simultaneously at different places. This they did to create the impression that theirs was a large secret army.

The Government announce rewards for people who can capture the outlaws. Basudeo created a sensation by announcing that whoever can capture and bring to him the Governor of Bombay, Sir Richard Temple, will receive a reward of five hundred rupees!

The Government, of course, announced prizes of several thousand rupees for anyone who could give some clue to Basudeo's whereabouts. For a time Basudeo became one of the major worries of the British in India.

Basudeo had two able assistants, Daulatrao Ramoshi and



Govindrao Davare. In a violent encounter, Daulatrao was killed. It was a big shock to Basudeo. At that hour of depression, totally tired and suffering from fever, Basudeo took shelter in a temple at Devar Nabhagi.

He was asleep. Suddenly he woke up to see two heavy boots pressed on his stretched arms. One Major Daniel, who had been after him for a long time, had at last found him out. The Major took advantage of his enemy's helpless condition.

Daniel's men were nearby. They captured Basudeo. He was tried and sentenced to imprisonment for life. In the court

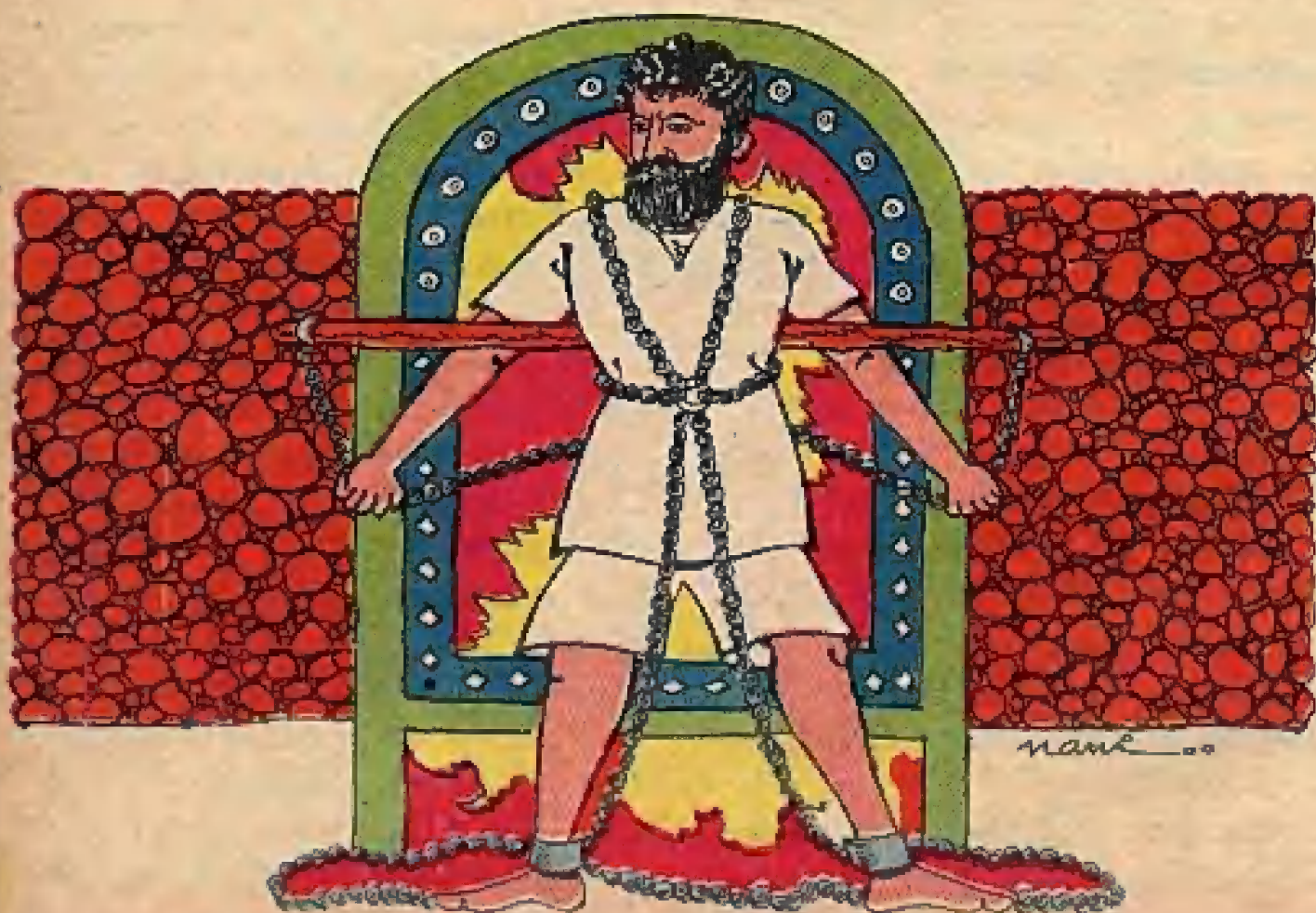
he declared, "Death would have been more honourable... Had I but succeeded in my designs, I would have accomplished a great task. It was my ambition to establish a Republic of Free India.... I have never desired or touched the wealth of others. If I collected gold and silver, it was for this meritorious object."

The Government did not dare to keep him in any Indian jail. He was deported to Aden. Even there Basudeo took a daring risk. In October 1880, one night, he tore apart a crack in the

roof of his cell and came out into the prison compound. He then scaled the high wall and escaped.

By dawn there was alarm in the prison. Dozens of guards and police chased the fleeing prisoner. Aden was a foreign land. It was difficult for Basudeo to hide. He was overpowered at a distance of 17 miles.

He was tortured and kept in chains under brutal supervision. He bore with the condition for two years. Then he refused to take food and died a martyr's death on February 17, 1883.





STORY OF INDIA — 44

THE IMPOSSIBLE MUSTARD SEED!

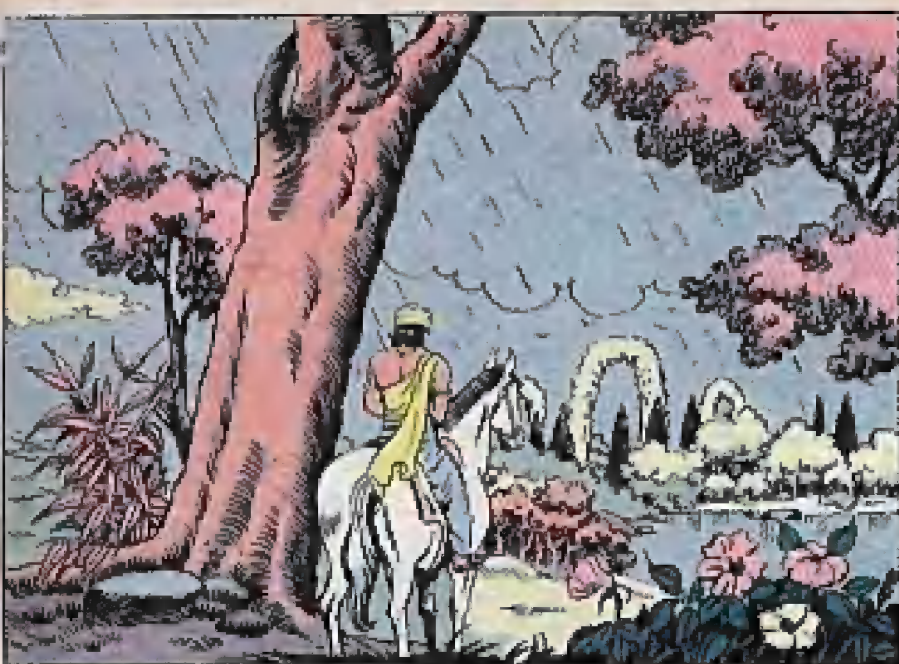
(Glimpses of the
Buddha's Life - 4)

One day Princess Yasodhara told her young son, Rahul, "Your father, I know, had four large chests filled with jewels. Go and ask him where they are. As his son, you ought to inherit them." The young Rahul was happy at the chance to talk to the great Buddha.

Rahul met the Buddha and said, "Father, allow me to inherit your wealth." The Buddha smiled and said, "I shall give you as your inheritance the greatest wealth I have — my enlightenment." And he directed Sariputta, one of his chief disciples, to initiate Rahul into the order of monks.

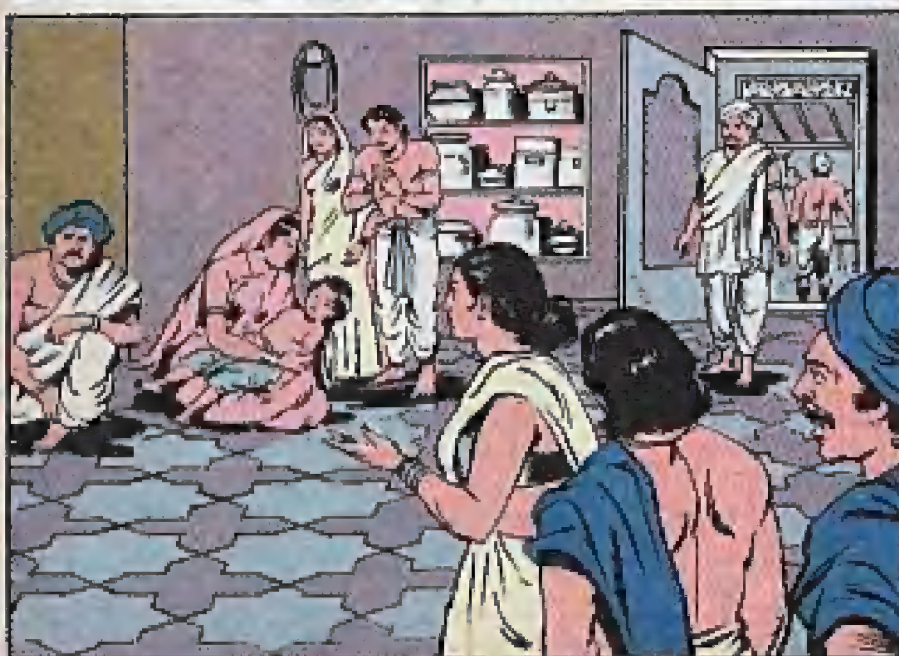
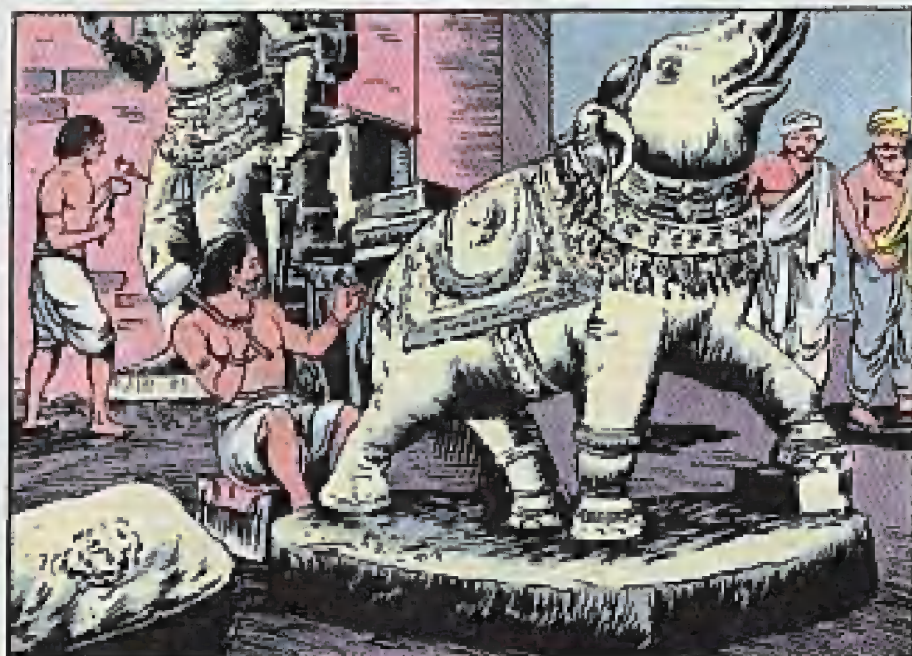


This made King Suddhodana extremely sad. He ran to the Buddha. "Lord, you gave up the throne, you made your younger brother Nanda too give it up. Now your son too is gone. Who remains for me?" The Buddha then made it a rule that no young man can become a monk without his parents' permission.



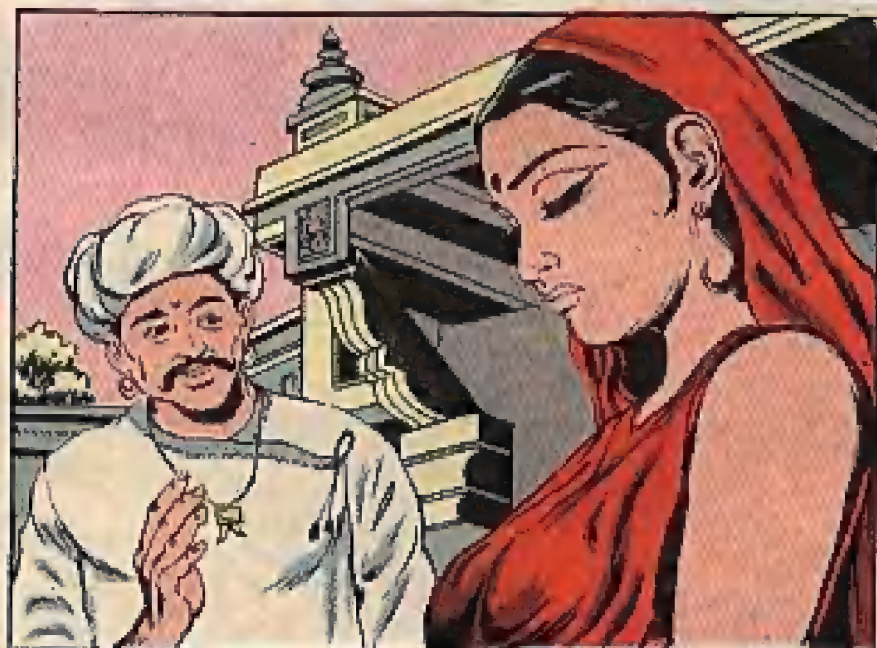
At Shravasti lived a wealthy merchant named Sudatta. He desired to offer to the Buddha a park named Jetavana which looked beautiful during the monsoon. The park's owner, Prince Jeta, said that he will give it away only if Sudatta would cover it with gold.

Such was Sudatta's devotion that he sold every bit of his property and bought gold. With rolls of gold he began covering the park. But he could cover only half of it. However, Prince Jeta was so moved that he covered the other half with gold and both received the Buddha.



While the Buddha was in Jetavana, Gautami, a woman of a noble family, lost her only son. She refused to part with the dead son, however strongly her relatives entreated her to do so. Great was her agony.

"Perhaps the Buddha can bring your child back to life," some people told Gautami. She hurried to the Buddha. "My sister, bring me a mustard seed from a house that has remained free from death," the Buddha told Gautami when she appealed to him to resurrect the child.



Gautami got the impression that the Buddha would perform a miracle if she got the seed. Anxious to get it, she ran from house to house. But she found no house where death had never entered. At the house of the richest merchant she learnt that they had three deaths during the year.

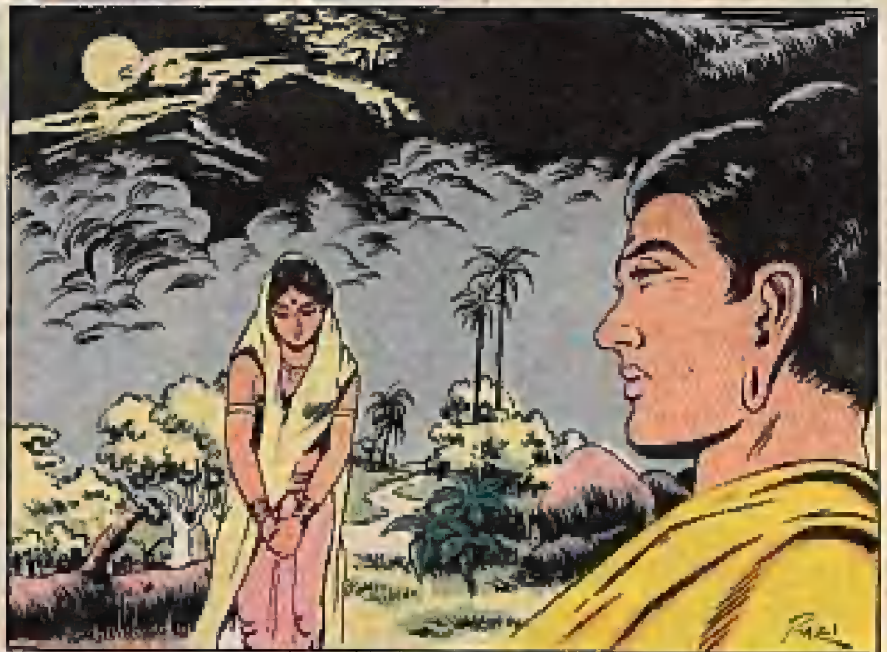
She went to the house of a famous physician, sure that his medicines would have checked death from entering his house! But she was shocked to learn that death had carried away the physician's son and daughter!





By and by Gautami realised what the Buddha meant to convey to her. She carried the dead child to the cremation ground and laid it on the pyre and said, "My son, all those who have died had been the sons and daughters of fond mothers like me!"

By evening Gautami returned to the Buddha. "Did you get the mustard seed?" asked the Buddha. "No, Lord, but I got your message," said Gautami. Now that she was ready, the Buddha taught her the true purpose of life. She became his disciple.



The Buddha was at Vaisali. One day he could know that his father was about to die. He hurried to Kapilavastu and blessed the dying king. Thereafter he set out on a journey to teach his doctrine to more and more deserving people.



Luck In The Wood

In a certain town lived a young man. He was ambitious. He had several schemes in his mind. But he could not put them into practice because he had no means to do so.

"Only if I could once meet the king and put forth my schemes before him, he would help me to work them out," he thought. He proceeded to the capital and met one of the officers of the court.

"Meet the king, eh? If he had the time to waste on strangers like you, d'you think he'd remain a king? No, he'd be reduced to a fellow like you," observed the officer.

"In that case, what's your advice, sir?" asked the young

man.

"It's wise of you to ask me for advice. Now, my advice is, forget meeting the king," said the officer.

"But I had come with so much hope!" murmured the young man.

"Is it not enough that you saw me and obtained a free advice?" asked the officer.

The young man left the capital disappointed. His humiliation before the officer often brought tears to his eyes. In order to hide them from his near ones he began spending most of his time in the forest near his village.

By and by the forest exercised a spell over him. He explored



new areas of the forest and was thrilled. One day, he saw two tombs lying neglected. Beside it there was a dry pond. Since he had nothing else to do, he devoted his time to clear the tombs of shrubs and creepers. He also dug the pond deeper and channelised the flow of a brook into it. Around the tombs he planted a number of trees that yielded colourful flowers and useful fruits. He made a hut for himself and began living there. In a few months the place became beautiful.

The road that passed through the forest was not far from the

spot. The young man cut the bushes and made a byroad to the spot. One day a batch of merchants took the byroad and reached the spot. The young man served them with cool water and a sackful of fruits. The merchants were very pleased with him. "Who lie buried here?" they asked.

"A great soul and his wife," said the young man. "I guard their tombs."

"You're a dutiful youth. Here is our contribution towards the upkeep of the tombs," said the merchants as they handed out some money to him.

Soon the spot became an attraction for all the travellers. What was a byroad became the main route to cross the forest. All those who stopped near the tombs paid the young man some money. Soon a strange rumour was in circulation: whoever prayed near the tomb with a certain wish found his wish fulfilled!

Thereafter not only did the travellers make it a point to stop at the spot and pay their respect to the tombs, but also the folks from around the forest began making regular trips to the spot. The young man

opened an inn and two shops to cater to the needs of the visitors. He employed some of his chums to manage them.

The news of the tombs reached the king. He sent a delegation of courtiers to look into the matter. They drew the picture of the tombs and also carried a slab of stone found near the tombs. The slab bore a symbol.

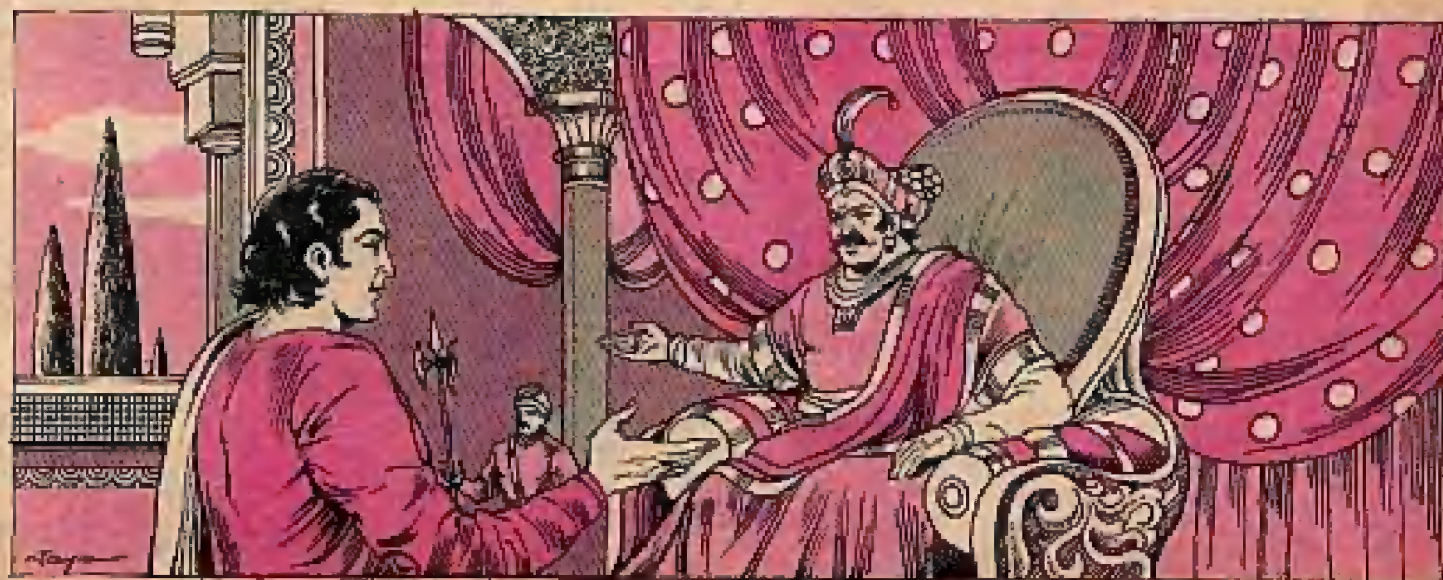
The king was taken aback at the stone. It bore the symbol of the founder of his dynasty. The founder and his wife, along with a handful of trusted people, had escaped into the forest, narrowly escaping the enemy's sword. The royal couple died in the forest. Their faithful companions raised tombs over their buried bodies, but all of them were soon killed in a bloody encounter with the

enemy. In the course of time the location of the tombs had been forgotten.

The king was immensely pleased at the discovery of the forgotten tombs. He summoned the young man and asked him, "Can you prove that if one prayed near the tombs with a wish in his heart, the wish was fulfilled?"

"Yes, my lord, I had an intense wish to see you. But I failed to see you however I tried. Now you called me from your side—thanks to my prayers near the tombs!" said the young man.

The king gave the young man a handsome reward. The area around the tombs was developed into a magnificent park. It was the young man who was appointed the superintendent over it.



PLIGHT OF THE WISE

You have read about Socrates, the great Greek savant, who had to give his life because he offended the orthodox and the superstitious. His dearest disciple was Plato who recorded the wisdom of his master. The King of Syracuse, Dionysius, invited him. Plato went. Dionysius was a tyrant. Plato advised him to rule the land according to a constitution. The king was so enraged that he sold Plato as a slave to a slave trader!

A friend of Plato heard about it. Luckily he had enough money to pay the slave-trader and set the great philosopher free.





A GIANT IN THE TOWN

In the dense forest of Vindhya-chala lived a lone giant. He was gifted with the power to assume any form at his sweet will.

But he was disgusted with life. He desired to put an end to it. But how to do it? Whenever he wished to die, he had to assume his own form. That was the law. In his own form he was so tall that a jump from a hill-top meant hopping down from a verandah. The water of the deepest river did not touch his neck.

But as days passed, his disgust for life grew more and more acute. He wept and howled. But that only scared away the beasts and birds, did not solve his problem.

One day he met a sage and narrated his sorrow to him. The

sage said, "I can understand your disgust for life. The age of the giants is over. I wonder if there would be even half a dozen giants left in all the forests and hills of the world. But, you are blessed with a long life. All I can do is to let you take birth as some other creature. Till the end of that life—which will cover the remaining span of your life as a giant—you will remember that you are a giant's soul. But that is no problem, for you won't feel so desolate and disgusted. Tell me whether you would like to be born as an elephant, or a lion, or a tiger, or a human being."

"What do you suggest?" asked the giant.

"Take a human birth. The human beings are the foremost

of all the creatures," said the sage.

The giant said that he would like to go and live in the human society for some days before taking a final decision. The sage approved of his idea.

The giant took a human form and reached a town which was the capital of a kingdom. The chief guard of the town, Virsingh, was famous as a heroic man. One day while Virsingh was roaming about in the outskirts of the town, the giant greeted him and said, "The people speak so much about your valour! Are you really that brave?"

"Brave? Ha ha!! It is a pity that there are no giants nowadays. That is why I cannot get a chance to crush them and win the glory of another Vikramaditya," boasted Virsingh.

Instantly, to Virsingh's horror, the giant assumed his real form and commanded Virsingh to walk around him thrice with hands folded and to bow down to him.

Virsingh shivered like a cat in the rain and did as commanded.

"So, this is what you human beings call valour!" commented the giant and he went away.

Soon he reached another town. Assuming the form of a



charming young man, he met a wealthy merchant. He knew that the merchant was looking for an eligible young man to marry his daughter.

"I am poor, but I am of your caste and I am quite educated. Will you give your daughter in marriage to me?" he asked.

"Not to a poor man," said the merchant. "I love my daughter so much that I will give her only to a prince."

"Really?" roared out the giant as he assumed his real form.

"I understand that your ship is in the sea. I'm going to sink it," said the giant.

"Please, giant sir, I agree to

your proposal," faltered out the merchant.

"Ha ha!!" laughed the giant while leaving. "This is the extent of your love for your daughter!"

He walked, looking an ordinary man, down to another part of the town. Before a landlord's house there was a gathering. Some singers were singing devotional songs while the landlord, his eyes closed, sat chanting the Lord's name.

After the session was over and all the people dispersed, the disguised giant went closer to the landlord and said, "You have chanted the lord's praise



so long. Would you mind once abusing him?"

"How dare you propose such a grotesque thing to a sincere devotee like me? Can I utter a word of abuse against the Lord even for my life?" shouted the landlord. The giant assumed his original form.

"If you don't abuse the Lord, I am going to throttle you!" he said bringing his fearful hands nearer to the landlord's throat.

"I'll abuse the Lord, I'll abuse the Lord, I'm at your command!" shrieked the landlord in panic.

The giant laughed. "This is the extent of human devotion!" he murmured and left the town.

Straight he returned to his forest and stood before the sage.

As the sage looked up affectionately, the giant said,

"My master, my trip to the human localities proved quite disappointing." He then narrated his experiences at length.

"So, my child, what would you like to become?" asked the sage.

"Well, grant me a human life!" said the giant.

"What! In spite of such experiences?" asked the sage with some surprise.

"Yes, because the human beings, despite their shortcomings, are never tired of life. They always build new hopes, new dreams, and new expectations. As a human being I will not feel bored with life. Besides" The giant stopped.

"What is besides, my child?" queried the sage.

"It is only among the human beings that sages like you are possible," replied the giant.





TOO GOOD FOR THE WORLD

Sudhir had nobody in the world except his grandmother. And the grandmother was extremely worried on his account.

A day did not pass when the grandmother was not required to chide Sudhir. Whenever the boy was out in the village or was just out of her sight, she spent anxious moments. She was at peace only when the boy was asleep!

Not that Sudhir was disobedient or mischievous. The opposite was the problem with him. He was so innocent and naive that often what he did with good motive threw him in the soup. People ridiculed him and laughed at him.

One year there was hardly any rain. The pond and the

well in the village dried up. Sudhir saw an old woman struggling to lift a jar. She had filled it with water from the river. But once she had kept it down, she found it difficult to lift it up again.

Sudhir lifted up the jar for her.

The woman, far from looking grateful, goggled her eyes at him. That surprised Sudhir who stood, trying to understand what annoyed the woman.

"How dared you defile my water!" shouted the woman angrily and, taking the jar from Sudhir, splashed Sudhir with the water.

Sudhir, all drenched, returned home and narrated the episode to his granny.

"You fool, had she ever sought your help that you went to her aid?" asked the granny disapprovingly.

Another day Sudhir saw a little boy being chased by an old man.

"Thief, you cannot escape however fast you run. I will break your head!" shouted the old man.

Sudhir took pity on the old man who, he knew, would not be able to catch up with the boy. At the same time he took pity on the boy whose head was in the danger of being broken.

He ran fast and took hold of the boy and gave him a thrash-

ing. The boy gave out a wail.

"Good old man! you need not break this little thief's head. I have already punished him!" Sudhir told the old man pleadingly.

"You ruffian, who are you to beat my grandson?" demanded the old man, fuming and swearing.

Passers-by collected around them. They too supported the old man. "You fool, why should you interfere in the affair between the grandfather and the grandson?" they asked Sudhir.

Sudhir felt very sad. He returned home and, upon narrating the incident to his granny,



was called a fool by her too!

Yet another day, Sudhir was walking by the river-bank. A couple had finished taking bath in the river. The husband was already on the high bank. The wife extended her hand for her husband to give her support to climb. The husband who had advanced a few steps did not see it. Sudhir took hold of the lady's hand and pulled her onto the bank.

The lady, not sure of the stranger's motive, muttered a mild protest. Her husband turned back and slapped Sudhir.

Sudhir returned home sad

as usual.

Soon his grandmother lay dying. "My child, all my saving is under my bed. Take it and leave this village. Here everybody knows you to be too naive for any work. Seek a livelihood elsewhere. Let me tell you once more that you ought not to go to anyone's help unless requested."

After the grandmother's death Sudhir left the village carrying the money she had left for him.

Passing through a meadow he heard a cry. Soon he found out the source of the cry. It was a well. A gentleman had fallen into it.



Sudhir leaned forward and said, "I ought not to help you come out, for you have not sought my help! I have suffered enough in life!"

Leaving the gentleman quite puzzled, Sudhir went away.

It so happened that two sepoy's were coming from the other direction. They heard the cry from the well and saw a young man walking away. Immediately they captured Sudhir and tied him to a tree and then rescued the gentleman from the well.

"I was looking into the well to see if there was water in it when another traveller gave me a push while snatching away my bag," said the gentleman.

"We have captured that thief," said the sepoy's and they showed Sudhir to the gentleman.

"Oh no, the thief was a strong

and stout fellow. This one seems to be a naive, though good-natured, fellow," observed the gentleman.

The sepoy's left. Sudhir walked with the gentleman, narrating his experiences.

"My boy, my guess was correct. You are too good for the ordinary life. I have a large orchard. I keep busy in my shop and cannot take proper care of it. There is a nice little hut in the orchard. I suggest that you live there and look after the property. I will look after you," proposed the gentleman.

Sudhir agreed. In a few days he realised that the work suited him most. He was not required to mix with many people. He found excellent friends in the trees of the orchard.





THE SAGA OF SHIVA

In a village called Sobhavati lived an ardent devotee of Shiva named Soumyaji. He had a young son named Siddharam, popularly called Siddhu. Siddhu was seven years of age when his father died.

Siddhu's mother, naturally, was very fond of her only child. Siddhu was a simple-hearted boy who never spoke a lie and never harmed anybody.

One afternoon he was playing with the other boys of the village, near the forest.

"Diwali is coming. On the occasion of the festival my sister and brother-in-law are coming to our house. They will bring so many gifts for me as they did last year," said one of the boys.

"My sister and her husband too are coming. She has promised me a new set of clothes. While here, she will prepare for

me so many kinds of sweets," announced another boy.

"Well, my sister and brother-in-law too must be coming!" exclaimed Siddhu.

All the boys burst into a loud laughter. Siddhu did not understand what was wrong with his statement.

"Why, if your sisters and brothers-in-law would be coming, why not mine?" asked Siddhu.

"You fool! For a sister and a brother-in-law to come to your house you must have a sister and a brother-in-law at the first place! Don't you even know that you don't have a sister? And who on earth can have a sister's husband without having a sister?" explained the oldest of the boys. The others laughed again. Siddhu returned home sad.



"Mother, why don't I have a sister?" he demanded.

"Who said you don't have a sister? Your sister and her husband live on the mount Shrisaila and they live happily. No one has a sister and a brother-in-law like yours. They are great and glorious," said the mother in the way of consoling the boy.

"Mother, in that case why don't you invite them to visit our house for the Diwali?" asked Siddhu.

"My son, they are rich. We are poor. We cannot entertain them properly. Besides, Shrisaila is far. Why to trouble

them? Is it not enough that you have a sister and a brother-in-law?" said the mother.

But Siddhu did not appreciate his mother's explanation. A sister is a sister. Why should she not come down to her brother and her mother even though they are poor? He decided to put the question to his sister.

Dawn was still hours away when Siddhu quietly left his home. He walked on and on. He knew in which direction mount Shrisaila was situated. By evening he could see the mount against the horizon. Though tired, he walked even faster. But climbing the mount was not an easy task. By the time he reached its top, it was midnight. The full-moon shone brightly. Siddhu looked for his sister's house. But all he could see on the mount was a temple. The priest had left for his village soon after the sunset. Not a soul was nearby. Siddhu entered the temple and cried out, "My sister, where are you?"

His voice echoed in the temple and in the rocks around it. But no voice responded. Siddhu called out again, "O my sister, don't you hear? I am Siddhu

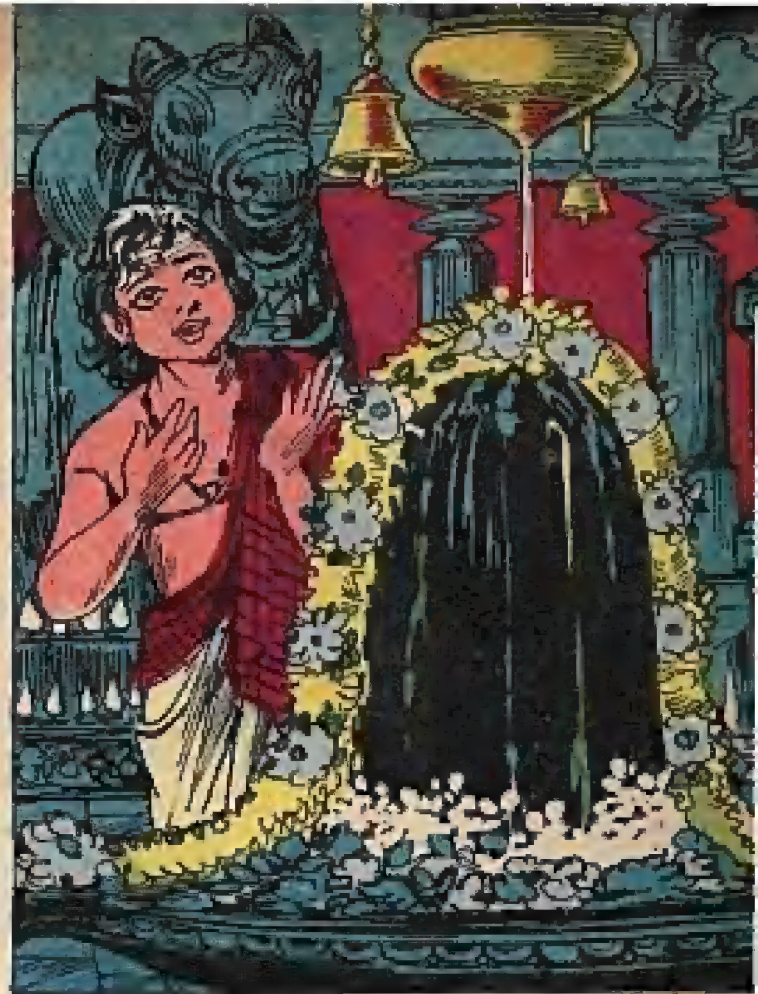
calling. I am tired. Come to me!"

Even then there was no response. Siddhu felt frustrated. He climbed a rock and decided to jump to his death. Suddenly a tender touch on his shoulder surprised him. He looked back and saw a beautiful lady standing behind him.

"You are Siddhu, are you? You must excuse me for my inability to recognise you at once. I was married and I had to come away here before you were born. All along I am living here. So I had never seen you. Tell me, my loving brother, what do you want of me?" asked the lady.

"My dear sister!" exclaimed Siddhu grasping the lady's feet, "You must visit our home on the occasion of Diwali. And you must bring my brother-in-law along. Where is he?" asked Siddhu.

"It's all right, Siddhu, I shall be visiting your house on the Diwali, at night. Your brother-in-law too would accompany me. And I will carry for you so many gifts that your friends would just marvel at them! But you should now go back home, for, mother is having a very anxious time," said the lady.



She then gave Siddhu such delicious dishes that Siddhu got the strength and the spirit of a lion. He thanked his sister and hopped down the hill. To his surprise, he found himself at his door-steps before the sunrise.

His mother was sitting near the door looking at the road.

"Mother, my sister has promised to come along with her husband. Be ready to receive them," announced Siddhu with great excitement. Siddhu's mother thought that the boy had fallen asleep somewhere in the forest and had dreamt an impossible dream.



Came the Diwali. Right from the sun-set Siddhu was walking to and fro his home and the end of the village road. Indeed, when all was dark there was a flash of light and Siddhu saw his sister and her husband and a number of strange beings approaching his house.

"Mother, mother, they have come!" he shouted as he ran towards his home. His mother came out. She was dazed with what she saw. She could recognise the visitors. They were

Parvati and Shiva. Even Gana-pati was there. Others were their companions.

The mother prostrated herself to them. Siddhu felt that there was something strange in the situation. He too prostrated. When the mother and the son got up, the visitors had disappeared. But they had changed Siddhu's hut into a fine mansion, filled with treasure.

Thus did Siddhu receive his Diwali gifts.

WONDER WITH COLOURS



A Strange Dispute

A woman, along with her infant son, was going to her father's house. It was summer. Wishing to have a dip in the river, she entered the water, leaving her son to play with a flower-plant.

A tall woman with red eyes approached the child.

"What a sweet bonny boy!" she said. Looking at the mother who was still in the river, she asked, "Can I take your child to my arms?"

"Why not, sister!" said the courteous mother.

The stranger woman lifted the boy and caressed him. The

boy did not seem to feel happy. He struggled to get down. But the stranger went on muttering pleasantries while trying to gag the child. Then she began moving away.

"Where are you going, sister?" asked the boy's mother climbing to the shore hurriedly.

But the woman made no reply. She kept walking with long strides.

Full of misgivings, the mother ran behind the woman, crying out to her, "For God's sake, give me back my child!"

"What do you mean? This



is my child!" shouted back the woman, and she sped up.

The mother tried to stop the child-lifter by force, but she was no match for her. The stranger kicked her and she fell down. However, she did not give up her chase.

Some villagers happened to pass by. Their attention went to the wailing mother and the haughty child-lifter. They stopped the two and made an investigation into their dispute. Each claimed the infant boy to be hers.

The strange nature of the dispute surprised the villagers. They led the women to the house of the village physician

who was renowned as a wise and just man.

The physician too was no less surprised. He looked into the eyes of the two women—one after the other—and smiled to himself. Then he drew a circle on the ground and placed the child inside the circle. He asked the stranger to take hold of the child's hands and the mother to take hold of the child's legs.

"Whoever can drag the child out of the circle is the child's mother," said the physician.

The two women began a sort of tug-of-war. But as soon as the child cried, the mother let go his legs and wept.



"Look here, judge, it is not my fault that she gave up the contest," said the other woman, her red eyes glittering in a sinister manner.

The physician looked at the villagers and asked, "Who is expected to feel concerned at the child's discomfort, the child's mother or another woman?"

"The child's mother, of course," said the villagers in a chorus.

"In the present case who showed that concern?" the physician asked again.

The villagers showed the child's mother.

"You are right. The child is

hers. And so far as the other woman is concerned, she is a

The physician had not completed his sentence when the other woman began to run. The villagers tried to stop her, but could not. She went out of the house and just disappeared.

"She was a female vampire. She wanted to suck this bonny child's blood. I knew it the moment I saw her. She cast no shadow; she did not wink," said the physician.

The physician was none other than Bodhisattva—the soul of the Buddha in one of his earlier incarnations.

From the Buddha Jatakas.





Who Plundered The Pyramid?

There seemed to be no way into King Cheops' burial chamber, set in the heart of Great Pyramid. Yet by the time workmen finally opened the tomb its vast treasures had vanished.

There are many who assert that the Great Pyramid at Giza, in Egypt, was the work of space-travellers from another planet. How else, they ask, could such an extraordinary building have been constructed almost five thousand years ago? They point out that the Pyramid was already two thousand years old when Rome was founded and Homer first recounted the adventures of Ulysses!

It may seem a sound argument. Certainly it is one that is hard to dismiss if you stand before the site of the Pyramid!

But modern research is so efficient that it tells us not only when and why it was built, but also that the Great Pyramid was raised by the efforts of local farmers and peasants and not even by armies of slaves.

An enormous task, but why

was it undertaken? So far as the ancient Egyptians were concerned, pyramids served not only a useful but an essential purpose, that of a safe resting place for their royal dead. The religion of the Nile people had grown up alongside their civilization. It started as a simple belief in the forces of nature and developed into a complex set of beliefs with the god Osiris for its centre. Osiris ruled an underworld where, provided that certain rituals were observed, the dead could continue a second life that was not much different from their first. It was believed that their spirit would return and take up residence in its old, earthly body from time to time.

It was this belief that made it so essential that a person's body be preserved and safeguarded



after death. Even a peasant could expect to be buried with care, accompanied by scraps of food and a few simple possessions to be used in his next life. An Egyptian pharaoh, who was looked upon almost as a god, naturally expected to be buried with all the trappings of royalty when his skilfully embalmed body was laid to rest in a massive tomb.

How the Rock was Split

It was during the 4th Dynasty (circa 2690 B.C.) that King Cheops planned the greatest of all the pyramids at Giza, close

to what is now the city of Cairo. The colossal weight of the proposed building called for foundations of almost limitless strength, a problem the architects solved by choosing a table of natural rock as the site. This was levelled with infinite care for although the builders lacked surveying instruments, they knew that water always found its own level. Accordingly, they built water channels round the site, and floated small boats at opposing points, their masts connected by cords. It was these cords that provided a constant level by which to work.

Much of the Great Pyramid consists of blocks of local limestone, but the facing stone was to be granite that had to be transported down the Nile on barges from Aswan, 800 kilometres away. Granite is an exceptionally hard stone. The workmen made slots into the rock walls and filled them with wooden wedges. The wedges were soaked with water until they expanded and split off chunks of rock.

The more accurate cutting was done with the aid of bronze saws set with diamonds and other hard jewels. It took the

workers 20 years to quarry what was needed.

The Burglary

The burial chamber was set low in a pyramid, and it had to be reached by a steep passage. In an attempt to make Cheops' funeral furniture absolutely safe from grave-robbers, the architects of the Great Pyramid decided that once it had served its purpose they would fill up this passage with granite blocks. Grave-robbers would never be able to reach it because there would be no way in. There was, however, a way out, an

apparently dead-ended well along which the workmen who sealed the tomb escaped once their task was completed.

When, at long last, men of our time succeeded in reaching the hidden tomb it was found that grave-robbers had already stripped it of its treasures and that even the pharaoh's mummy had disappeared. The robbery had been carried out so skilfully that no trace of a break-in had been left. It suggests that the thieves must have had special knowledge of the Pyramid's design. Perhaps they were the descendants of the workmen who filled up the secret passage.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES

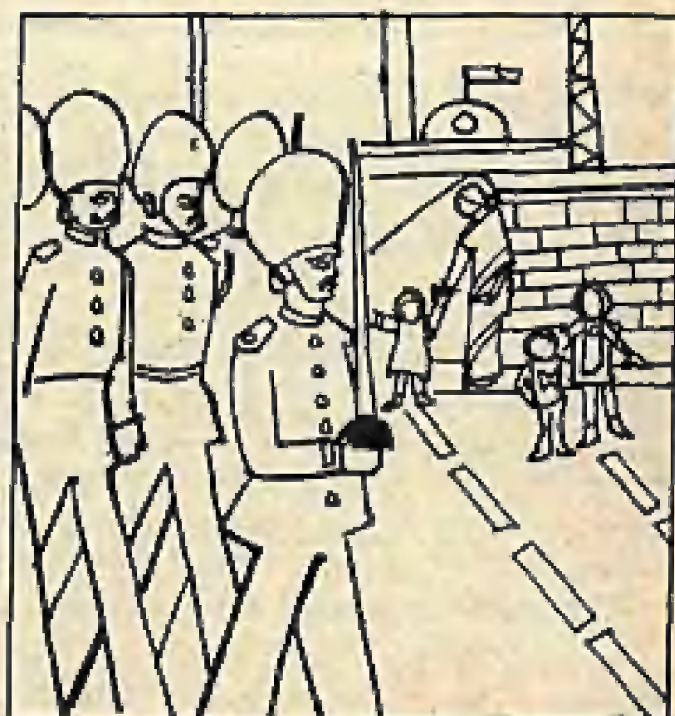
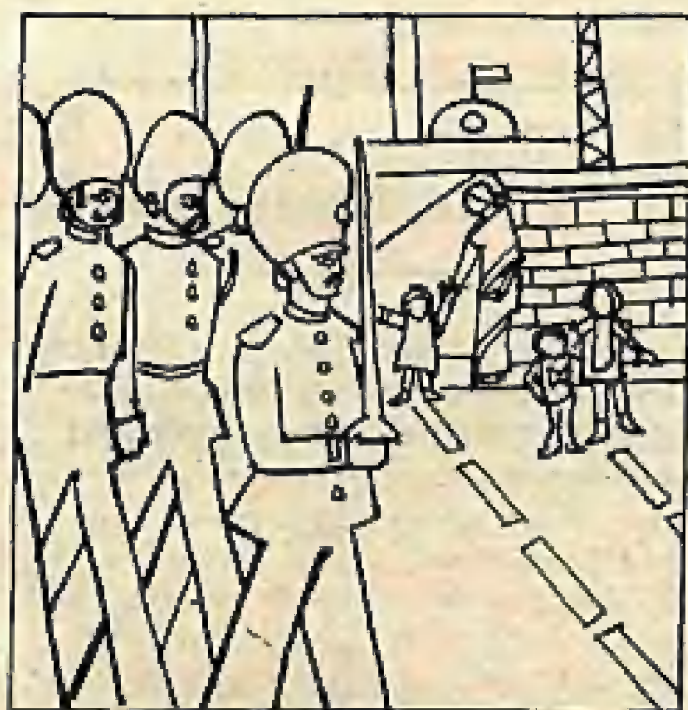


PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. A. L. Syed



Mr. P. V. Subramanyam

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs .25/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

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